

**REMARKS**

Claims 14-26 are pending in the present application and are rejected. Claim 15 is herein amended. New claim 27 is added herein. Claim 17 is herein cancelled without prejudice.

**Applicant's Response to Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102**

**Claims 14, 15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 9-325521 (JP '521).**

It is the position of the Office Action that JP '521 discloses the invention as claimed. JP '521 is directed at a stocker and conveying system. The system includes a stocker 1 and a head-lining transport device 2. Stocker 1 includes first storage shelf 12, second storage shelf 13, and transport device 11. Head-lining transport device 2 includes rail 31 and truck 32. According to Figure 1 and paragraph [0019], shelf 14 of second storage shelf 13 is disposed directly beneath the rail 31 and truck 32 of the head-lining transport device. Loads 3 are placed on the shelf 14 after being released by chuck 33 of the head-lining transport device 2. A load 3 is then picked up by chuck 23 of transport device 11 and placed in the first storage shelf 12 or second storage shelf 13 accordingly. It is noted that first storage shelf 12 is taller than second storage shelf 13.

Applicants respectfully note that the Office Action incorrectly states that the rail 31 is disposed over the "elevating means," presumably interpreting Figure 1 to disclose that the rail 31 is disposed above the transport device 11 due to the perspective of the drawing. In fact, as discussed above, the rail 31 is actually disposed directly above the shelf 14 of the second storage

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shelf 13. See paragraph [0019] of the machine translation of JP '521, which states that "a shelf 14 is further located just under the chuck means 33 of a truck 32."

In response to the pending rejection, Applicants herein amend the claims in order to incorporate the subject matter of claim 17 into claim 14. In other words, present claim 14 recites that "said elevating space is provided immediately below said running rail." Applicants respectfully submit that this amendment distinguishes over JP '521, since the transport device 11 is not disposed immediately below the rail 31. Instead, JP '521 discloses that the shelf 14 of second storage shelf 13 is disposed immediately below the rail 31. Thus, because JP '521 fails to disclose or suggest the requirements of claim 14, claim 14 must be allowable over the cited reference. Additionally, Applicants note that the rejection of claim 17 is moot, since claim 17 is herein cancelled without prejudice. Further, with regard to claims 15 and 18, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable due to their dependency on claim 14. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

However, Applicants note that present claim 14 does not recite the subject matter of the alternative embodiment of Figure 7, discussed from page 22, line 16 to page 23, line 3. In order to claim this subject matter, Applicants herein add new claim 27. It is respectfully submitted that JP '521 also does not disclose or suggest the system of new claim 27. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

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**Claims 16 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over JP ‘521.**

It is the position of the Office Action that JP ‘521 may disclose the disposal of a stocker between processing devices. The Office Action notes that even if this interpretation is inaccurate, it would have been obvious to locate a stocker between two processing devices.

In response, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 16 and 20 are patentable due to their direct and indirect dependency on present claim 14, which Applicants submit is patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

**Applicants’ Response to Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103**

**Claims 21-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP ‘521 in view of JP 4-80107 (JP ‘107).**

It is the position of the Office Action that JP ‘521 discloses the invention as claimed, with the exception of an elevator platform engaging a bottom surface of a load. The Office Action relies on JP ‘107 to provide this teaching.

In response, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 21-24 are patentable due to their indirect dependency on present claim 14, which Applicants respectfully submit is patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

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**Claims 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP ‘521 in view of Bernard (U.S. Patent No. 4,389,157).**

It is the position of the Office Action that JP ‘521 discloses the invention as claimed, with the exception of an elevator platform engaging a bottom surface of a load. The Office Action relies on Bernard to provide this teaching.

In response, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 21 and 22 are patentable due to their indirect dependency on present claim 14, which Applicants submit is patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

**Claims 23-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP ‘521 in view of Bernard, and in further view of JP ‘107.**

It is the position of the Office Action that the combination of JP ‘521 and Bernard discloses the invention as claimed, with the exception disclosing rollers on the shelves. The Office Action relies on JP ‘107 to provide this teaching.

In response, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 23-25 are patentable due to their indirect dependency on present claim 14, which Applicants submit is patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

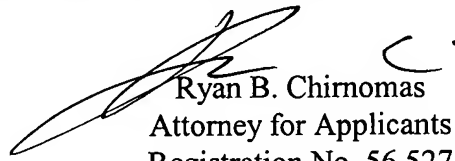
For at least the foregoing reasons, the claimed invention distinguishes over the cited art and defines patentable subject matter. Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

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Should the Examiner deem that any further action by applicants would be desirable to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned agent.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,  
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